Instructors, David C. Hester and Anne W. Stewart

This is an interdisciplinary course concerned with the practice of teaching Bible in the congregation. It is concerned, in particular, with developing skills for leading congregational Bible study of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. These skills include: the practice of biblical exegesis, interpretation, and educational design. We want to look with considerable depth at the process that lies “behind the scenes” of the most common adult church education experience: group Bible study led by a pastor or church educator.

**Expected Learning Outcomes**  [Primarily MDIV SLO 1 and MDIV SLO 9]

At the end of the course, students should:

1. Be able to exegete a passage of Scripture and create a plan for teaching the text in a congregational setting;
2. Have had an experience teaching one or more texts from Job, Proverbs, and/or Ecclesiastes to adults;
3. Examine issues related to Bible study in a congregation, including:
   a. Biblical authority
   b. Teaching Old Testament in the church
   c. Exegesis and interpretation skills and presuppositions
   d. The particular context of adult education

**Methods and Requirements**

**Reading and Class Preparation**

All students are expected to complete the common readings for the course. These include:


Selected portions of volumes on *Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes* in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Volumes 4-5. [Reserve]

Students are also expected to consult at least two commentaries on Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes for introduction to the book, historical and literary issues, theological perspectives, and commentary on specific passages being studied or taught, one commentary being *The New Interpreters Bible*’s relevant volumes.
Teaching (50%)
Students will teach twice during the semester, first in pairs, the second time individually. You will be given a list of passages from which to choose, and your second teaching session should not be from the same biblical book as your first. Exegetical notes, a statement concerning the passage’s significance, and a plan for teaching should be submitted to instructors at least a day in advance of each teaching session (5-7 pages, double-spaced). Presentations will be followed by evaluative discussion. Each presenter will submit a brief (no more than 1 page) self-evaluation of the teaching session, which takes peer feedback into account. The self-evaluation is due by the start of the next class session following the teaching presentation. Each student is required to have notes and reflections on passages that his/her peers are teaching in their team and individual sessions. These may be collected in a notebook or journal or whatever form you find helpful. Instructors may ask to look at your notes and reflections from time to time during the semester. These are working documents for you to bring and use in class during discussions.

Dates for teaching to be determined in class

Written assignments (25% each)
1. Each student will write two pieces on biblical authority and interpretation. The first piece, no more than 2 pp. in length, should set forth your perspective on biblical authority and the implications of your perspective for interpreting scripture texts. This paper is due in class on September 30th. Your second piece will address specifically biblical authority and interpretation in a congregational setting, focused particularly on the significance of Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes for today. The piece can take the form of a sermon, a presentation to a particular group of leaders in the church, the first lesson in a Bible study series, or a confirmation class session or some other format/genre that you can imagine might be helpful for presenting such ideas to a congregation or other ministry setting. It should integrate insights from the common readings, critically evaluated and judiciously used and reflect thoughtful development and refinement with respect to your earlier paper. This paper should be 6-8 pp. long and focus on a particular text in your chosen book as means to illustrate your perspective. This paper is due November 4th.

2. Each student will submit a final project. You might, for example, choose to create a plan for teaching another passage of scripture, choosing your text from the Wisdom book you did not teach from previously. The project would include teaching notes, exegetical information, introductory material, a description of teaching method, and a fairly detailed plan for teaching a selected text. Or you might choose to explore a topic of interest and importance to you related to Job, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes, its formation, history of interpretation, theology, or place in the church. Topics will be selected in consultation with instructors. 10-15 pages, double-spaced. Due last day of Class.

Use of Inclusive Language
Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and
their particular potential for contributing to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse traditionally has been patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial equality and justice.

Citation of Sources
Be careful to document fully any information included in your papers that is not original. Also be aware that when you summarize information, even when you give the complete documentation information, your summaries should be in your words and not retain too much of the original author’s style. A paper that presents the ideas or writing of someone else as if they were your own constitutes plagiarism, and seminary policy on academic honesty will be followed. The Academic Support Center has handouts, and/or the Library can be of assistance.

Class Attendance
Students are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the course, except for illness or other valid reasons.

Special Accommodations
Students requiring accommodation for a learning disability should be in contact with Kathy Mapes in the ASC Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) as soon as possible and should speak with the instructors to arrange appropriate adjustments.

Web Site
This course is posted on CAMS, which may be accessed through the Seminary web site. The CAMS site will be used for access to course documents, such as the syllabus and calendar, for student teaching plans to be submitted in advance of class presentations, for faculty prepared materials that may be made available to class participants, and for threaded conversations around questions or issues, as desired.

Before attending class, please reread the books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Sept 4</td>
<td>Course introduction and introduction to wisdom literature in the Bible</td>
<td>read Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 9</td>
<td>Review of Proverbs and of Biblical Poetry</td>
<td>read the introduction to the book of Proverbs in the NIB Bible Commentary, vol. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, Sept 11</td>
<td>Review of Ecclesiastes and of Canonical Interpretation</td>
<td>read the introduction to the book of Ecclesiastes in the NIB Bible Commentary, vol. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 16</td>
<td><strong>Workshop on Proverbs</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> assignments to be given in class on Sept 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, Sept 18</td>
<td><strong>Workshop on Ecclesiastes</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> assignments to be given in class on Sept 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 23</td>
<td><strong>Review of Job and of Biblical Narrative</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> read the introduction to the book of Job in the NIB Bible Commentary, vol. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, Sept 25</td>
<td><strong>Workshop on Job</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> assignments to be given in class on Sept. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Sept 30</td>
<td><strong>Biblical Authority and Interpretation</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> read the following essays in Brown, <em>Engaging Biblical Authority</em>: Brown, Introduction; Canon, ch. 3; Cardoz-Orlandi, ch. 4; Lapsley, ch. 11; McBride, ch. 13; and two additional essays of your choice. Prepare a two page max description of your understanding of biblical authority and implications for interpreting texts, in conversation with the assigned readings. Your papers will be discussed in class, then a copy turned in to the instructors.</td>
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<td>Thurs, Oct 2</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of the Character of Adult Education; and Bracke and Tye,</strong></td>
<td><em>Teaching the Bible in the Church</em> <em>Preparation:</em> Read the book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 7</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of Groome,</strong> <em>Christian Religious Education</em></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read chapters 9-10;</td>
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<td>Thurs, Oct 9</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of Wink,</strong> <em>Transforming Bible Study</em></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read the book</td>
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<td>Oct 14-16</td>
<td><strong>Research and Study Week</strong></td>
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<td>Tues, Oct 21</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Bracke and Tye’s method</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 23</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Groome’s method</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct 28</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Wink’s method</strong></td>
<td><em>Preparation:</em> Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs, Oct 30</td>
<td><strong>Two Bible study sessions, using Wink’s method</strong></td>
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Preparation: Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied.

** Tues, Nov 4 **

** Individual Bible Study sessions begin, with two sessions each day **

Preparation: Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied.

** Thurs, Nov 6—Dec 2 **

** Two Individual Bible study sessions **

Preparation: Read commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied.

** Thurs, Nov 20 **

** No Class **

** Thurs, Dec 4 **

** Final Bible studies and course conclusion **

Preparation: Read Commentaries as assigned for the passages to be studied.

Commit yourself to completing the course evaluation on line.

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**Bibliography**

**Wisdom Literature**


**Job**

Commentaries


Other Studies


Proverbs

Commentaries


Other Studies

McKenzie, Alyce M. *Preaching Proverbs: Wisdom for the Pulpit*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996. [This doesn’t need to be on the list; it isn’t on teaching Bible study, strictly speaking, but the ideas of application might be useful to the students.]

**Ecclesiastes**

Commentaries


Other Studies